A Brief History of the Court House & Grounds

Loudoun County Clerk’s Office
Historic Records & Deed Research Division

Gary M. Clemens
Clerk of Circuit Court
The present Court House built in 1894 by the Norris Brothers of Leesburg stands on land given in 1757 by Nicholas Minor to the Justices of Loudoun County for the purpose of building and maintaining a Court House. This building replaced two previous structures of brick; the first begun in 1758 and completed in 1761, and the second built in 1811. The Court House has never burned and both earlier buildings were razed in order to build the next court building. The interior of the present court house was reconfigured slightly in the 1950s with walls moved, the Judge’s Bench raised, and the Jury Box relocated to its present position. The original balcony, windows, and benches remained in the same place. New lighting and acoustic tile were installed in the 1970s. In the early 1770s a bell for the Court House was purchased and imported to Leesburg. Today this bell is located inside the main entrance of the court complex. The bell currently in the belfry was probably put in place when the clock was installed around 1912. The location of the 1758 building on the Court House lot is unknown. The 1811 building stood approximately where the current building stands. Several other structures have stood on the Court House lot over the years including the original Clerk’s Office, built in 1800, which stood in the southwest corner of the lot. The Revolutionary War Memorial named “The Spirit of Loudoun” by Jay Hall Carpenter was dedicated on November 11, 2015. The Confederate Memorial by F. William Siever of Richmond was dedicated on May 18, 1908. Also located on the lawn are memorials for both World Wars, the Korean War, Vietnam, and those who have fallen since 9/11. For more information please see the [Loudoun County Courtyard Walking Tour](#).

Images on front page left to right from the top:
1. Close-up of the court house lot on the Leesburg Map from 1759.
2. Artist rendering of the first Loudoun County court house.
3. Image of the second court house in Loudoun built in 1811.
4. The current Loudoun County court house built in 1894.
Portraits in the Loudoun County Court House

**Edward S. Turner** 1870 – 1922  
Presented by Edward Nicols  
Circuit Court Judge 1906 – 1916  
Oil on canvas painted by Hugh H. Breckenridge

**Edward Nicols** 1847 – 1923  
Presented by Mrs. Edward Nicols  
Leesburg attorney in the early 1900s  
Commissioned the portraits of Judges Nichol, Keith, Turner, and Chief Justice John Marshall  
Oil on canvas painted by Hugh H. Breckenridge

**John Richard Henry Alexander**  
Circuit Court Judge 1929 – 1953  
Oil on canvas by Elizabeth Boyd

**James Keith** 1839 – 1918  
Presented by Edward Nicols  
Circuit Court Judge 1870 – 1894  
Served on the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals  
Oil on canvas painted by Hugh H. Breckenridge
Portraits in the Loudoun County Court House

**John Marshall** 1755 – 1835  
Presented by Edward Nicols  
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and served in the Virginia Legislature  
Secretary of State under President John Adams  
Copy after the original by Henry Inman (1801 – 1846)  
Oil on canvas painted by Hugh H. Breckenridge

**Charles E. Nichol** 1854 – 1924  
Presented by Edward Nicols  
Circuit Court Judge 1895 – 1906  
Oil on canvas painted by Hugh H. Breckenridge

**James Monroe** 1758 – 1831  
Presented by the Hayden Bartlet Harris family  
Fifth President of the United States  
Lived at Oak Hill, Loudoun County  
Oil on canvas painted by Charles B. King
Portraits in the Loudoun County Court House

**Westmoreland Davis** 1858 – 1942
Governor of Virginia 1918 – 1922
Lived at Morven Park, Loudoun County
Copy after the original by Irving R. Wiles (1861 – 1948)
Oil on canvas by Gladys Wiles

**Carleton Penn**
Circuit Court Judge 1970 – 1987
Oil on canvas by Nancy Freeman

* References from Misc. Papers-Court House-Portraits file including speeches from the dedication of the portraits, as well as appraisal documents of the portraits from Red Fox Fine Art, 1990.
About the Artists:

**Hugh Breckenridge** 1870 – 1937
Most of the portraits were painted by Breckenridge
Born in Leesburg
Studied Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts 1887 – 1892 served on the faculty until his death
1900 opened a School of Painting in Darby PA which he maintained until 1918
1920s opened his summer school, the Breckenridge School of Art in East Gloucester, Massachusetts
Admired for his academic portraits of elite society
Also produced a series of abstracts

**Charles Bird King** 1785 – 1862 (Monroe)
American
Studied with Edward Savage in New York 1800 – 1805
Studied with Benjamin West in London 1805 – 1812
Early career in Philadelphia and Baltimore
Achieved some renown in Washington D.C. painting American notables
Best remembered for series of 143 paintings of Native American delegates visiting Washington in 1821

**Gladys Lee Wiles** 1890 – 1984 (Davis)
Daughter of artist Irving Ramsey Wiles
Lived and worked in New York

**Elizabeth Boyd**
We have been unable to obtain information about this artist at this time.

**Nancy Freeman**
We have been unable to obtain information about this artist at this time.

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